WRITTEN ANSWERES TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Replacing MSP

1851. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that some Agriculture Experts have suggested to replace the system of Minimum Support Price for specified crops by a system of remunerative prices and a participatory price insurance scheme, and to expand the National Employment Guarantee Scheme to provide employment beyond 100 days a year;

(b) if so, whether Government have agreed to their request; and

(c) if not, whether alternative proposals are also being considered or the present schemes being further strengthened?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) The Government has not recieved any suggestion for expansion of National Employment Guarantee Scheme to provide employment beyond 100 days a year. Suggestions for replacement of Minimum Support Price (MSP) by a system of remunerative prices and a participatory price insurance scheme have also not been recieved. However, the National Agriculture Insurance Scheme provides protection to farmers against yield risk while MSP protects them from distress sale when market prices fall below MSP.

Fertilizer and fertility

†1852. SHRI ISAM SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether fertility of the land of our country has declined due to use of chemical fertilizers; and

(b) if so, the details of action plan formulated by Government to deal with it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The average consumption of fertilizers is

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

only 89.82 kg/ha. This level of consumption is not considered high for declining the fertility of the land. However, the Government is advocating "Integrated Nutrient Management" (INM) by promoting soil test based balanced and judicious use of chemical fertilizers in conjunction with organic manures, bio-fertilizers, Green Manure, Farm Yard Manure, compost, vermicompost etc.

The Government is also promoting organic farming by using organic inputs for plant nutrients.

Alternatives to tobacco cultivation

†1853. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that tobacco cultivation has been affected due to the ban imposed on the advertisements of tobacco products;

(b) if so, whether any suggestion has been given by the Ministry to tobacco cultivators for alternative cultivation; and

(c) whether any research has been undertaken for suggesting alternative cultivation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) No, Sir. However, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is undertaking research and development work on alternate crops to tobacco. Several alternate crops and cropping systems have been developed and recommended by the ICAR for tobacco growing areas in different agro-climatic zones of the country.

Customs Duty on raw-materials for irrigation system

1854. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the decision taken or proposed to be taken regarding exemption of customs duty on raw materials to be imported for manufacture of micro-irrigation system sold in Andhra Pradesh to make it more affordable for an ordinary farmers to utilize this system, specially when the ground water

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